

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 16310 071530Z
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1. REFTEL GAVE A EUROPEAN VIEWPOINT OF CURRENT RTG ATTITUDES TOWARD INDOCHINESE REFUGEES IN THAILAND. THE OPERATIONS CENTER FOR DISPLACED PERSONS IN THAILAND PUBLISHED A PAMPHLET TITLED "CALL FOR HUMANITY." WINYU ANGKANARAK, UNDER SECRETARY OF INTERIOR, SIGNED THE FOREWORD TO THE PAMPHLET. ALTHOUGH DATED MAY 19, THE PAMPHLET CAME OFF THE PRESS IN EARLY JUNE.

2. THE PAMPHLET GIVES A DATED AND PESSIMISTIC VIEW OF REFUGEE EXODUS FROM THAILAND FOR RESETTLEMENT ABROAD. WHILE 1977 WAS NOT A BANNER YEAR IN THAT RESPECT, THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS OF 1978 HAVE SHOWN A SHARP ACCELERATION IN DEPARTURES, PARTICULARLY FOR THE UNITED STATES AND AUSTRALIA. THE FOLLOWING EXTRACTS FROM THE PAMPHLET'S CONCLUSION ARE CHIEFLY INTERESTING FOR THEIR PUBLIC COMMENTS ON LOCAL SETTLEMENT TO THAILAND, A FORMERLY TABOO SUBJECT FOR THE RTG.

3. "THAILAND IS NOW FACED WITH THE REALITY THAT IT MUST RE-
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PAGE 02 BANGKO 16310 071530Z

EXAMINE THE ROLE IT SHOULD CONTINUE TO PLAY IN THE MANAGEMENT OF (THE) DISPLACED PERSONS PROGRAM. OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMIGRATION TO THE U.S.A., AND OTHER COUNTRIES, RATHER THAN EXPANDING HAVE BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED. THE NUMBER OF DISPLACED PERSONS SEEKING REFUGE GROWS AT A FASTER RATE THAN THE NUMBER OF DISPLACED PERSONS LEAVING THAILAND. AS OF THE END OF 1977 THERE WERE MORE THAN 100,000 PERSONS LIVING IN THE CAMPS; DURING 1977 ONLY 14,000 PER-

SONS WERE ACCEPTED BY THIRD COUNTRIES FOR EMIGRATION. THIS (IS) SO, EVEN IN LIGHT OF A REPORT FROM A CITIZEN'S GROUP FROM AMERICA WHICH RECOMMENDED THE REMOVAL OF BARRIERS THAT ARE PRESENTLY PREVENTING GREATER NUMBERS OF DISPLACED PERSONS (FROM GOING) TO THE UNITED STATES. EQUALLY OF CONCERN IS THE FACT THAT ALTHOUGH THE UNHCR AND ICEM HAVE TALKED ABOUT UNDERTAKING SKILL-INVENTORIES OF THE DISPLACED PERSONS FOR THE PURPOSE OF SPONSORING GROUP MOVEMENTS FOR RESETTLEMENT IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES BY THE TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY THROUGH SELECTIVE MIGRATION, NO MOVEMENTS HAVE YET TAKEN PLACE. FURTHER COMPOUNDING THE PROBLEM IS THE FACT THAT AT A TIME WHEN A SOLUTION DOES NOT SEEM IMMINENT, NEITHER THE UNHCR NOR THE VOLUNTARY AGENCY SECTOR CAN GUARANTEE CONTINUED FUNDING OR SUPPORT FOR A SUSTAINED PERIOD OF TIME."

4. "WHILE IT IS EASY TO SUGGEST ALL DISPLACED PERSONS BE PERMITTED TO RESETTLE IN THAILAND, EVEN IF FUNDING WERE ON HAND, POLITICAL AND NATIONAL SECURITY MATTERS COUPLED WITH THE SHORTAGE OF ARABLE LAND MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO CONSIDER THIS ALTERNATIVE. THAILAND STILL HAS HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF LANDLESS FARMERS; IN ADDITION WE ARE EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES IN ASSIMILATING THE MORE THAN 70,000 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES WHO CAME TO OUR COUNTRY IN 1945. WE ARE HOWEVER, IN SPITE OF THESE TWO MAJOR OBSTACLES, STUDYING THE POSSIBILITY OF PERMITTING SOME OF THE DISPLACED PERSONS TO RESETTLE HERE.

5. "SOME GOVERNMENTS ARE NOW PATTING THEMSELVES ON THE BACK FOR UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 BANGKO 16310 071530Z

THEIR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO THE REFUGEES GENERATED BY THE FALL OF INDOCHINA. REGRETFULLY, MANY NATIONS HAVE NEVER RESPONDED TO THE PROBLEM; SOME WHO DID ARE NOW NOT STRONGLY CONTRIBUTING TO ITS LASTING SOLUTION. SUCH SELF-INTEREST IS NOT IN HARMONY WITH THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE CALLED FOR TO RESOLVE THE PLIGHT THAT FACES THESE "STATELESS" PEOPLE. MAY THAILAND POINT OUT THAT INCLUDING THOSE WHO HAVE TRANSITTED OUR COUNTRY SINCE 1975 WE HAVE CARED FOR MORE THAN 159,000 DISPLACED PERSONS AND WILL CONTINUE WITHIN OUR MEANS TO PROVIDE FOR THE WELFARE OF THOSE WHO HAVE TURNED TO US FOR SEEKING REFUGE. WHILE IT SHOULD NOT BE NECESSARY TO STATE: THAILAND DID NOT CAUSE THE COLLAPSE OF THE GOVERNMENTS WHICH GENERATED THE PROBLEM. THE FACT THAT WE HAVE PERMITTED THE DISPLACED PERSONS TO TAKE REFUGE IN OUR COUNTRY HAS CAUSED POLITICAL PROBLEMS WITH OUR NEIGHBORS. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ASSISTING THESE UNFORTUNATE PEOPLE MUST BE SHARED AMONG ALL HUMANITARIAN COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD. THE TIME HAS COME FOR THOSE POWERS AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO FORMULATE LONG-RANGE PLANS FOR THE VIABLE RESETTLEMENT OF THESE PEOPLE. THAILAND HAS LET IT BE KNOWN THAT ONCE THE DISPLACED PERSONS POPULATION HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED IT WILL PERMIT RESETTLEMENT WITHIN ITS COUNTRY.

6. "UNHCR'S PAST HISTORY OF WORKING WITH REFUGEES HAS SHOWN MOST

PEOPLE CAN ACCEPT, AND WILL TOLERATE "DISRUPTION" OF THEIR LIFE
STYLE FOR A PERIOD UP TO SIX MONTHS. FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN FORCED
TO LIVE IN DISPLACED PERSON CENTRES IN EXCESS OF TWO YEARS WE CAN
ASSUME THEIR TOLERANCE LEVEL HAS BEEN OVERTAXED AND, ESPECIALLY
AMONG THE CHILDREN, SERIOUS EMOTIONAL DAMAGE IS OCCURRING. IT
SEEMS FITTING THAT WITH 1979 BEING DESIGNATED AS THE INTERNATIONAL
YEAR OF THE CHILD ALL FREE WORLD GOVERNMENTS ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO
HAVE SIGNED THE DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS SHOULD TAKE SPECIAL
STEPS TO MAKE POSSIBLE THE MOVEMENT FROM THE CAMPS OF ALL WIDOWS
WITH SMALL CHILDREN WHO DESIRE THIRD COUNTRY RESETTLEMENT. SPECIAL
ATTENTION SHOULD ALSO BE FOCUSED ON THE NEEDS OF THE MORE THAN
THREE HUNDRED (UN)ACCOMPANIED ORPHANS. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE NO EASY
COURSES OF ACTION TO FOLLOW IN THE RESETTLEMENT OF THESE "TARGETED"
POPULATIONS; THE FACT REMAINS THAT THE PROBLEM THEY REPRESENT
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PAGE 04 BANGKO 16310 071530Z

MUST BE RESOLVED.
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